

## Art, following Life as a painter

Kathy Spalding's 70-foot *Continuum of Life* watercolor, executed as a 124 foot original at Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is a vivid portrait of the wildlife that is one of Southwest Florida's greatest treasures. Beginning in the skies of the Gulf to KewWayden's barrier island, it flows – like nature itself – across the sand, into the shallows around red mangroves creeping into the mudflats and finally up to the high lands and swamps. All along the way are the birds, fish, plants and animals that create a living symphony here.

The work is both macrocosm and microcosm. Spalding, well known for capturing intricate detail in both her paintings and her bronze sculptures, has created a series of rich and vivid portraits of terns and herons, sand dollars and starfish, tree frogs, turtles, panthers, orchids, mangroves and other assorted wildlife, each in relation to its own particular environment. And yet each segment of the continuum stands on its own as a fully realized painting.

Spalding was tapped for this project by Rookery Bay director Gary Lytton, based on her reputation for capturing both the physical attributes and the very essence of wildlife. Having spent much of her childhood in South Florida, she grew up familiar with and with a respect for the animals who shared her environment. After college, her love of travel combined with her passion for art, as she undertook a series of expeditions to paint the indigenous wildlife of such exotic locales as Antarctica, the Amazon rainforest, Tasmania, Australia, Trinidad and Tobago – travels which further strengthened her concern for and commitment to the environment.

Those experiences made Spalding the ideal artist to undertake the intricate Rookery Bay project. But knowing that the cost of the project would divert funds from necessary research, Spalding offered to donate the work it would take to create the continuum.

The project took six months from original conception to completion. Spalding began with a list of flora and fauna provided by Rookery Bay staff and came up with the overall flowing design. She then broke the design into 30 individual component paintings that, once assembled, course seamlessly into each other.

Underscoring the importance of this project, complete folios of 30 artist's proofs have been donated to the State of Florida and to the Library of Congress. A limited number of complete folios are also available for purchase by collectors.

To further spread interest in the project and share the environmental respect it engenders, Spalding and Rookery Bay agreed to make and sell a limited number of prints of the component paintings in two sizes. Prints measuring 23" X 30" are available in an edition of 200. Prints measuring 36" X 46" are available in an edition of 50. Both editions are giclee prints (an advanced archival reproduction method that captures every detail of the original) and are printed on high quality watercolor paper.

Prints available at  
Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve  
300 Tower Road Naples, Florida 34113-8059  
www.rookerybay.org (239)417-6310



Spalding working on the first two watercolors for Rookery Bay

Flyingfish Fountain Atlantis, Paradise Island, Nassau



## A Life Intertwined with Art as a sculptor

One of the most internationally notable sculptors of true-life bronzes, Kathy Spalding creates works of both great presence and delicate detail. By developing a unique system of mixing wax with a variety of resins, she has taken the ancient "lost wax" process into new realms, where the unforgiving medium of bronze can be coaxing into revealing the feel of a feather or the texture of skin. Her work is extraordinary, as her singular process affords her the ability to create fine detailing in larger-than-life-sized compositions.

The daughter of two architects, Spalding began her artistic journey early on, developing a penchant and talent for drawing as a child. After childhood studies at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, she undertook formal training in drawing and etching at New York's Pratt Institute. While enrolled there, she took time to broaden her education with courses in drawing and lithography at Cornell University, engraving and bronze casting at the University of Iowa and engraving at the acclaimed Atelier Garrigues in France. Kathy's sister, Dr. Marilyn Spalding is a renowned wildlife disease specialist, researching in the Everglades and internationally for over 30 years.

Spalding's lifelong love of nature and travel combined, and she pursued independent studies and work in such exotic locales as the Amazon and Rio Negro in Brazil, the Falkland Islands, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Tasmania, New Zealand, Australia and Western Europe. An assignment from Society Expeditions even brought her to Antarctica, to create a series of watercolor paintings of the continent's native species.

In 1986, Spalding turned her full attention to bronze sculpting, where she soon mastered and improved on the centuries-old "lost wax" technique. Rather than beginning with clay or plaster, she sculpts directly in wax, warming it to shape it and cooling it to add her distinctive fine details. Once the wax sculpture is completed, it is encased in porcelain slurry. The wax is then melted out of the shell and replaced with molten bronze. After cooling, the shell is chipped away and the sculpture emerges.

Because of the massive size of Spalding's larger sculptures, they must often be cast in pieces and reassembled into a whole, a process that requires engineering as well as artistic ability. *Cypselurus*, her Flying Fish Fountain commissioned by Sol Kerzner as an outdoor centerpiece at his famed Atlantis Resort Casino, is a vivid example of this. A 50-foot wide arching display of 48 flying fish, the sculpture contains 22,000 pounds of bronze and is constructed to withstand 120 mile per hour winds. Each fish in this articulate design required as many as 18 pieces for casting.

Spalding's art and sculpture have been recognized and collected by major national and international corporations, fine art collectors, museums and naturalist organizations.

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